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TRYGON ALTAVELA.—“*Andorinha do mar.*” *T. corpore rhomboideo, duplo latiore quam longo, alis expansis, cauda perbrevis.*

Pastinaca marina altera περιπλατεία, *Altavela Neapoli dicta Columnae*. Will., Hist. 65. Tab. C. 1. f. 3. (Copied from F. Columna.)—Rariss.

A single female individual only has occurred, measuring five feet and a half from tip to tip of wings.

LII.—*Information respecting Botanical Travellers.*

Extracts from a Journal of the Mission which visited Bootan, in 1837-38, under Captain R. BOILEAU PEMBERTON. By W. GRIFFITH, Esq. Madras Medical Establishment.*

THE Mission left Gowahatti on the 21st December, and proceeded a few miles down the Burrumpootur to Ameengoung, where it halted.

On the following day it proceeded to Hayoo, a distance of thirteen miles. The road, for the most part, passed through extensive grassy plains, diversified here and there with low rather barren hills, and varied in many places by cultivation, especially of *sursoo*. One river was forded, and several villages passed.

Hayoo is a picturesque place, and one of considerable local note; it boasts of a large establishment of priests, with their usual companions, dancing girls, whose qualifications are celebrated throughout all Lower Assam. The village is a large one, and situated close to some low hills; it has the usual Bengal appearance, the houses being surrounded by trees, such as betel palms, peepul, banyan, and caoutchouc. To Nolbharee we found the distance to be nearly seventeen miles. The country throughout the first part of the march was uncultivated, and entirely occupied by the usual coarse grasses; the remainder was one sheet of paddy cultivation, interrupted only by tops of bamboos, in which the villagers are entirely concealed; we found these very abundant, but small: betel palms continued very frequent, and each garden or enclosure was surrounded by a small species of screw pine, well adapted for making fences.

Four or five streams were crossed, of which two were not fordable: jheels were very abundant, and well stocked with water fowl

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and waders. At this place there is a small bungalow for the accommodation of the civil officer during his annual visit; it is situated close to a rather broad but shallow river. There is likewise a bund road.

We proceeded from this place to Dum-Dumma, which is on the Bootan boundary, and is distant ten miles from Nolbharee. We continued through a very open country, but generally less cultivated than that about Nolbharee; villages continued numerous as far as Dum-Dumma.

December 31st. We left for Hazareegoung, an Assamese village within the Bootan boundary.

We passed through a much less cultivated country, the face of which was overrun with coarse grassy vegetation. No attempts appeared to be made to keep the paths clean, and the farther we penetrated within the boundary, the more marked were the effects of bad government. We crossed a small and rapid stream, with a pebbly bed, the first indication of approaching the Hills we had as yet met with.

We left on January 2d for Ghoorgoung, a small village eight miles from Hazareegoung; similar high plains and grassy tracts, almost unvaried by any cultivation, were crossed; a short distance from the village we crossed the Mutanga, a river of some size and great violence during the rains, but in January reduced to a dry bouldery bed. There is no cultivation about Ghoorgoung, which is close to the Hills, between which and the village there is a gentle slope covered with fine sward.

We entered the Hills on the 3d, and marched to Dewangari, a distance of eight miles. On starting we proceeded to the Durunga Nuddee, which makes its exit from the Hills about one mile to the west of Ghoorgoung, and then entered the Hills by ascending its bed, and we continued doing so for some time, until in fact we came to the foot of the steep ascent that led us to Dewangari. The road was a good deal obstructed by boulders, but the torrent contains at this season very little water.

The mountains forming the sides of the ravine are very steep, in many cases precipitous, but not of any great height. They are generally well-wooded, but never to such a degree as occurs on most other portions of the mountainous barriers of Assam. At the height of about 1000 feet we passed a choky, occupied by a few Booteas, and this was the only sign of habitation that occurred.

Dewangari, the temples of which are visible from the plains of Assam, is situated on a ridge, elevated about 2100 feet above the

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Dewangari, the temples of which are visible from the plains of Assam, is situated on a ridge, elevated about 2100 feet above the

level of the sea, and 1950 above that of the plains. The village extends some distance along the ridge, as well as a little way down its northern face. The centre of the ridge is kept as a sort of arena for manly exercises; about this space there occur some picturesque simool trees, and a few fig trees, among which is the banyan.

During our long stay at this place we had many opportunities of forming acquaintance with the Soobah, as well as with the immediately adjoining part of his district. We found this almost uncultivated, and overrun with jungle. No large paths were seen to point out that there are many villages near Dewangari; in fact the only two which bear marks of frequent communication, are that by which we ascended, and one which runs eastward to a picturesque village about half a mile distant, and which also leads to the plains.

The Soobah we found to be a gentlemanly unassuming man; he received us in a very friendly manner and with some state; the room was decently ornamented, and set off in particular by some well-executed Chinese religious figures, the chief of which we were told represented the Dhurma Rajah, whose presence even as a carved block was supposed to give infallibility. We were besides regaled with blasts of music. His house was the most picturesque one that I saw, and had some resemblance, particularly at a distance, to the representations of some Swiss cottages. It was comparatively small, but as he was of inferior rank, his house was of inferior size.

The population of the place must be considerable; it was during our stay much increased by the Kampa people, who were assembling here prior to proceeding to Hazoo. Most of the inhabitants are pure Booteas; many of them were fine specimens of human build, certainly the finest I saw in Bootan: they were, strange to say, in all cases civil and obliging. Cattle were tolerably abundant, and principally of that species known in Assam by the name of *Mithans*; they were taken tolerable care of, and picketed in the village at night: some, and particularly the bulls, were very fine, and very gentle. Ponies and mules were not uncommon, but not of extraordinary merits. Pigs and fowls were abundant. The chief communication with the plains is carried on by their Assamese subjects, who are almost entirely Kucharees: they bring up rice and putrid dried fish, and return with bundles of manjistha.

On the 23rd, after taking a farewell of the Soobah, who gave us the Dhurma's blessing, and as usual decorated us with scarfs, we left for Rydang, the halting-house between Dewangari and Khegumpa, and distant eight miles from the former place. We reached it late in the evening, as we did not start until after noon. We first de-

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scended to the Deo-Nuddee, which is 800 or 900 feet below the village, and which runs at the bottom of the ravine, of which the Dewangari ridge forms the southern side, and we continued ascending its bed, almost entirely throughout the march. The river is of moderate size, scarcely fordable however in the rains; it abounds with the fish known to the Assamese by the name of Bookhar, and which are found throughout the mountain streams of the boundaries of the province.

24th. Left for Khegumpa. The march was almost entirely an uninterrupted ascent, at least until we had reached 7000 feet, so that the actual height ascended amounted nearly to 5000 feet. It commenced at first over sparingly wooded grassy hills, until an elevation of about 4000 feet was attained, when the vegetation began to change; rhododendrons, and some other plants of the same natural family making their appearance. Having reached the elevation of 7000 feet by steep and rugged paths, we continued along ridges well clothed with trees, literally covered with pendulous mosses and lichens, the whole vegetation being extra-tropical. At one time we wound round a huge eminence, the bluff and bare head of which towered several hundred feet above us, by a narrow rocky path or ledge overhanging deep precipices; and thence we proceeded nearly at the same level along beautiful paths, through fine oak woods, until we reached Khegumpa; the distance to which, although only eleven miles, took us the whole day to perform.

This march was a beautiful, as well as an interesting one, owing to the changes that occurred in the vegetation. It was likewise so varied, that although at a most unfavourable season of the year, I gathered no fewer than 130 species in flower or fruit. Rhododendrons of other species than that previously mentioned, oaks, chesnuts, maples, violets, primroses, &c. &c. occurred. We did not pass any villages, nor did we meet with any signs of habitation, excepting a few pilgrims proceeding to Hazoo.

Khegumpa itself is a small village on an exposed site; it does not contain more than twelve houses, and the only large one, which as usual belonged to a Sam Gooroo, appeared to be in a ruinous state. The elevation is nearly 7000 feet. The whole place bore a wintery aspect, the vegetation being entirely northern, and almost all the trees having lost their leaves. The cold was considerable, although the thermometer did not fall below 46°. The scarlet tree rhododendron was common, and the first fir tree occurred in the form of a solitary specimen of *Pinus excelsa*. In the small gardens attached to some of the houses I remarked vestiges of the cultivation of tobacco

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and Probosa*. In the valleys however surrounding this place there seemed to be a good deal of cultivation, of what nature distance prevented me from ascertaining.

25th. Left for Sasee. We commenced by descending gradually until we had passed through a forest of oaks, resembling much our well-known English oak; then the descent became steep, and continued so for some time; we then commenced winding round spurs clothed with humid and sub-tropical vegetation; continuing at the same elevation we subsequently came on dry open ridges, covered with rhododendrons. The descent recommenced on our reaching a small temple, about which the long-leaved fir was plentiful, and continued without interruption until we reached a small torrent. Crossing this, we again ascended slightly to descend to the Dimree river, one of considerable size, but fordable. The ascent recommenced immediately, and continued uninterruptedly at first through tropical vegetation, then through open rhododendron and fir woods, until we came close upon Sasee, to which place we descended very slightly. This march occupied us the whole day. After leaving the neighbourhood of Khegumpa we saw no signs of cultivation; the country, except in some places, was arid; coarse grasses, long-leaved firs, and rhododendrons forming the predominating vegetation. We halted at Sasee, which is a ruined village, until the 28th. The little cultivation that exists about it is of barley, buckwheat, and hemp.

28th. We commenced our march by descending steeply and uninterruptedly to the bed of the Geeri, a small torrent, along which we found the vegetation to be tropical; ascending thence about 5000 feet, we descended again to the torrent, up the bed of which we proceeded for perhaps a mile; the ascent then again commenced, and continued until we reached Bulphai. The path was generally narrow, running over the flank of a mountain whose surface was much decomposed; it was of such a nature that a slip of any sort would in many places have precipitated one several hundred feet. The face of the country was very barren, the trees consisting chiefly of firs and rhododendrons, both generally in a stunted state. The vegetation was not interesting until we came on a level with Bulphai, when we came on oaks and some other very northern plants. We were well accommodated in this village, which is a very small one, situated in a somewhat sheltered place, and elevated to 6800 feet above the sea. The surrounding mountains are very barren on their southern faces, while on the northern, or sheltered side, very fine

* *Eleusine coracana.*

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25th. Left for Sasee. We commenced by descending gradually until we had passed through a forest of oaks, resembling much our well-known English oak; then the descent became steep, and continued so for some time; we then commenced winding round spurs clothed with humid and sub-tropical vegetation; continuing at the same elevation we subsequently came on dry open ridges, covered with rhododendrons. The descent recommenced on our reaching a small temple, about which the long-leaved fir was plentiful, and continued without interruption until we reached a small torrent. Crossing this, we again ascended slightly to descend to the Dimree river, one of considerable size, but fordable. The ascent recommenced immediately, and continued uninterruptedly at first through tropical vegetation, then through open rhododendron and fir woods, until we came close upon Sasee, to which place we descended very slightly. This march occupied us the whole day. After leaving the neighbourhood of Khegumpa we saw no signs of cultivation; the country, except in some places, was arid; coarse grasses, long-leaved firs, and rhododendrons forming the predominating vegetation. We halted at Sasee, which is a ruined village, until the 28th. The little cultivation that exists about it is of barley, buckwheat, and hemp.

28th. We commenced our march by descending steeply and uninterruptedly to the bed of the Geeri, a small torrent, along which we found the vegetation to be tropical; ascending thence about 5000 feet, we descended again to the torrent, up the bed of which we proceeded for perhaps a mile; the ascent then again commenced, and continued until we reached Bulphai. The path was generally narrow, running over the flank of a mountain whose surface was much decomposed; it was of such a nature that a slip of any sort would in many places have precipitated one several hundred feet. The face of the country was very barren, the trees consisting chiefly of firs and rhododendrons, both generally in a stunted state. The vegetation was not interesting until we came on a level with Bulphai, when we came on oaks and some other very northern plants. We were well accommodated in this village, which is a very small one, situated in a somewhat sheltered place, and elevated to 6800 feet above the sea. The surrounding mountains are very barren on their southern faces, while on the northern, or sheltered side, very fine

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oak woods occur. The houses were of a better order than those at Sasee, and altogether superior to those of Khegumpa. They are covered in with split bamboos, which are secured by rattans, a precaution rendered necessary by the great violence of the winds, which at this season blow from the south or south-east. Bulphai is a bitterly cold place in the winter, and there is scarcely any mode of escaping from its searching winds. The vegetation is altogether northern, the woods consisting principally of a picturesque oak, scarcely ever found under an elevation of 6000 feet. There is one small patch of cultivation, thinly occupied by abortive turnips or radishes, and miserable barley. It was at this place that we first heard the very peculiar crow of true Bootan cocks, most of which are afflicted with enormous corns.

On the 31st we resumed our journey, ascending at first a ridge to the N.E. of Bulphai, until we reached a pagoda, the elevation of which proved to be nearly 8000 feet; and still above this rose to the height of about 10,000 feet a bold rounded summit, covered with brown and low grass. Skirting this at about the same level as the pagoda, we came on open downs, on which small dells, tenanted by well-defined oak woods, were scattered. After crossing these downs, which were of inconsiderable extent, we began to descend, and continued doing so until we came to Roongdoong. About a third of the way down we passed a village containing about twenty houses, with the usual appendage of Sam Gooroo's residence; and still lower we came upon a picturesque temple, over which a beautiful weeping cypress hung its branches. We likewise passed below this a large temple raised on a square terrace basement. From this the descent is very steep, until a small stream is reached, from which we ascended very slightly to the castle of Roongdoong, in the loftiest part of which we took up our quarters. From the time that we descended after crossing the downs, the country had rather an improved aspect, some cultivation being visible here and there. We met a good many Kampas, pilgrims, and one chowry-tailed cow, laden with rock salt, which appears to be the most frequent burden.

[To be continued.]

Mr. Schomburgk's recent Expedition in Guiana.

[Continued from p. 328.]

WHEN marching early in a morning over the savannahs, and on approaching an Indian settlement, we frequently observed on the small sandy footpath a number of marks, which a hasty observer would

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